

**To:** R7 Senior Staff[R7\_Senior\_Staff@epa.gov]  
**From:** Bryan, David  
**Sent:** Tue 5/28/2013 4:28:03 PM  
**Subject:** St. Louis Post-Dispatch - Groups urge groundwater monitoring at Ameren plants

# Groups urge groundwater monitoring at Ameren plants

By JEFFREY TOMICH – St. Louis Post-Dispatch – 5/23/13

[http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/groups-urge-groundwater-monitoring-at-ameren-plants/article\\_8fa08031-edb1-501f-87fa-715810186260.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/groups-urge-groundwater-monitoring-at-ameren-plants/article_8fa08031-edb1-501f-87fa-715810186260.html)

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Environmental groups are urging the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to monitor groundwater at three Ameren Missouri coal-fired power plants in the St. Louis area where coal waste has for decades been stored in unlined ponds.

In a letter to Missouri DNR Director Sara Parker Pauley, the Sierra Club and Labadie Environmental Organization asked for groundwater monitoring at Ameren's Labadie, Meramec and Rush Island plants.

The groups said there is urgency for testing because residents near each of the plants use groundwater for domestic purposes and Ameren is seeking to construct new ash landfills at all three locations.

At two of the plants, Meramec in south St. Louis County and Rush Island in Jefferson County, the utility has proposed building ash landfills atop existing ash ponds. At Labadie in Franklin County, Ameren has been engaged in a lengthy battle with some area residents over a planned ash landfill next to the Missouri River.

Renee Bungart, a DNR spokeswoman, said the agency will review the letter, but provided no additional comment.

In a statement, Ameren Missouri said it has installed groundwater wells at its Labadie plant that "reflect compliance with state and federal requirements." It didn't provide any details. The utility also said it will comply with and future monitoring requirements in its state water-discharge permits.

Nationwide, dozens of cases of groundwater contamination from coal ash disposal facilities have been documented by the Environmental Protection Agency and advocacy groups. Unlined ponds are a particular concern because there's no barrier to keep metals present in the ash from

escaping.

None of the sites are in Missouri because the state hasn't required monitoring, the letter said.

However, the groups cite a report provided by Ameren to the DNR that showed groundwater contamination from an ash pond at the Meramec plant was discovered in 1988.

And in Illinois, where Ameren is required to do monitoring around coal ash ponds, contamination has been found at multiple locations, including the Venice plant just across the river from St. Louis.

Illinois regulators last summer issued notices of violation claiming ash ponds at the Meredosia, Grand Tower, Newton and Coffeen plants were causing violations of groundwater standards.

"We know that Ameren knows how to look for contamination, and when they look for it they usually find it," said Maxine Lipeles, co-director of the Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic at Washington University School of Law, who is representing the Sierra Club and LEO.

The DNR has required groundwater monitoring at coal ash ponds when it renews a power plant's water-discharge permit — something that's supposed to happen every five years.

But permits for all three of the Ameren plants cited in the letter expired long ago. The Labadie permit expired in 1999.

And even if the DNR requires groundwater monitoring when it eventually does reissue water permits, it could still be many years after that until groundwater data is collected and provided to the state.